

# CONTINUATION SCHOOL 1927-28

By Bill Gladding

It's always a delight to hear from family descendants who have long since left the community, but still think of Tavistock as their home. Jane (Hotson) Casey is one of those people who recently reached out to the Tavistock and District Historical Society with information and photographs that add value to the collection.

Jane recently came across the Historical Society website ([www.tavistockhistory.ca](http://www.tavistockhistory.ca)) and started searching through the more than 3,000 Lemp Studio Collection (LSC) photographs contained there.

"What a treat to find 'Hotson' photos in your archives," she said in her email. I am Jane Hotson, third daughter of Ralph Hotson, and granddaughter of Hugh and Alice Hotson, longtime Tavistock residents. Hugh and Alice are the parents of Fred, Ralph, Jean and Arthur (Art) Hotson. All are now



JANE (HOTSON) CASEY / CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

*Tavistock Continuation School 1927-28: From the left, front row: Clarence Neeb, Carl Matthies, Violet Roth, Margaret Wilker, Annie Aiken, Gladys Baechler, Wilhelmine Matthies, Helen Liebler, Georgina Bauer, Sadie Kaufman, Jean Saunders, Helene Stock, Marie Liebler, Val Stein, Alvin Metz, Walter Merklinger; Second row: Mr. H. H. Carlyle, Willie Schaefer, Lorne Piehl, Ralph Hotson, Elizabeth Morgenroth, Margaret Ratz, Dorothy Vogt, Georgina Neeb, Marie Roth, Margaret Keutsch, Ruth Stockmann, Pauline Lemp, Harold Cook, David Rudy, Martin Woelfle, Gordon Hammer, Miss. E. M. McKay; Back row: Gordon Matthies, Stewart Bell, Howard Heist, Ella Hunke, Hilda Schlitt, Inge Stockmann, Otila Wittig, Olive Aiken, Margaret Weicker, Myrna Hopkinson, Gladys Jickling, Marian Platt, Brock Siegner, Laurie Harris, Oliver Strahm, Howard Boeckner.*

deceased."

Along with finding a couple of portraits of her grandparents, she also searched the 'Veterans' portion of the website and found that the photo of

her father, Ralph Pearson Hotson, was actually a photo of his brother-in-law, Stuart (Stu) Freeman. Stu was married to Ralph's sister, Jean. As a result, Jane sent three

photos of her father in uniform to be added to the database.

While Jane was delving into her family photos, she came across a 13" wide image of the 1927-28

Tavistock Continuation School that was amongst her father's collection. All the names had been handwritten on the back of the photo. She offered it to the Society and it is now a

cherished addition to the school photo database.

"So glad to have found your web-site," she wrote. "Best wishes to you and the dear town of Tavistock. So many memories!"

## TAVISTOCK PUBLIC & CONTINUATION SCHOOL

By Bill Gladding

If you look through your copy of Fact & Fantasy, written and compiled by Carl Seltzer as a Rotary Centennial Project in 1967, you will see a section on the Tavistock Public and Continuation School. Although the village was founded in 1848, no local school appeared until the construction of a two-room building on William Street. Abraham Brett was the first principal. As mentioned in that story, "In their wisdom our school board had set up a Grade C Continuation School, so that their students could obtain at least two years of secondary training without leaving home."

With the coming of Miss Jessie Lawrence in 1914,

named principal in 1918, Tavistock became "a Grade B school with work up to Junior Matriculation, i.e. Forms I, II & III. This enabled students to qualify for their Entrance Certificate, their Intermediate and their Junior Matriculation, with which they could enter Normal School at Stratford, to qualify for a Public School Teaching Certificate, Second Class. In order to win a First Class Certificate - the courses being available at London Normal - a candidate had to write the Senior Matriculation examination of the Upper School, usually at Stratford District Collegiate."

Up to 1932 the Port Dover railway line provided the means of getting to school in

Stratford. Collegians and Business College students then caught the 4:30 train home on the main rail line.

The Tavistock School Board was in charge of hiring teachers and appointing principals. In 1895, Charles Cameron retired and received a handsome watch after four years as principal. Mr. V. Stock, M.P.P. was chairman of the board at that time and in his address he stated: "You have brought our school up to a high state of proficiency in every department so that it now occupies an outstanding position as to 'Entrance' and 'Continuation Class' work."

Monthly reports in the newspaper stated the names of all the pupils enrolled with their average percentage for the

month. In the other classes, only those taking honours were named. Names were listed in order of merit.

A second storey was built onto the school in 1898 with the north-east addition added in 1916.

By 1910, many schools were having trouble keeping teachers with a scarcity of qualified teachers. Mr. J. J. Edwards, B.A. of Smith's Falls was hired for a salary of \$1,100 per annum. He was formerly principal at a 12-room school in Port Arthur.

In the year 1928, it was reported in the Gazette that "About fifty pupils of the Continuation School motored to Horman's Grove near Fairview on Friday afternoon and held their annual picnic. A programme of sports was

carried out and swimming and softball were also enjoyed after which refreshments were served."

In May of 1928 the last meeting of the Continuation School Literary Society was held in the Library Hall on Maria Street. President Howard Boeckner presided and humorous dialogues were given by Ralph Hotson, Stewart Bell and Oliver Strahm with a reading by Carl Matthies and an address by Frederick Hotson. George Weston and Maurice Ogden gave a saxophone duet, a ukulele duet by Ella Hanke and Ross Phillips, a coronet solo by Lewis Wilker, and an accordion solo by William Schaefer.

According to the Gazette reports, that same year,

the Women's Institute held a garden party on the school grounds with entertainment provided by the talented students of the school. Robert Walter was the school board and program chairman.

"The program consisted of piano duets by Ellen and Dwight Kellerman, Charlotte and Carl Wittig, and Wilhelmine and Gordon Matthies; a humorous reading and vocal solo by Margaret Ratz, readings by Frank Aikens and Carl Matthies, a vocal duet by Wilhelmine Matthies and Helen Liebler, a piano solo by Jack Haney, vocal duets by Hywel and Kenneth Griffiths and selections by the high school orchestra."

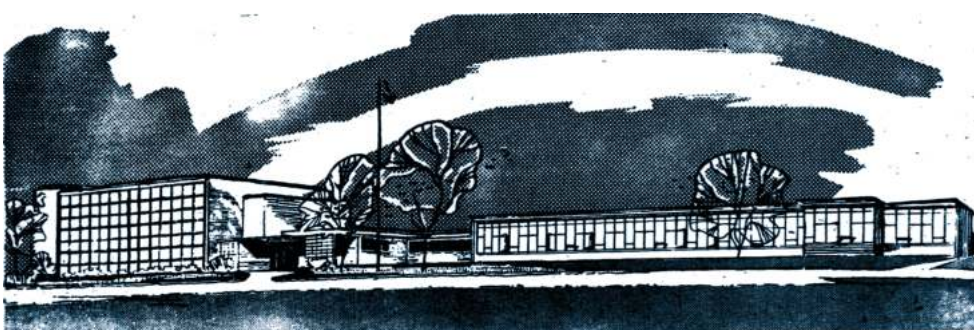


PLATE COURTESY OF THE K-W RECORD

An artist's rendering of the proposed \$350,000 Waterloo-Oxford High School as published in the Gazette in 1954. When Tavistock was approved to join the project, four classrooms were added to the plans.

## WATERLOO-OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL

In December of 1954 the Gazette reported that a committee of the Tavistock School Board was investigating the possibility of students of the Continuation School attending the new Waterloo-Oxford High School to be built between New Hamburg and Baden. Architects Barnett and Rieder provided a sketch of the \$350,000, 11-room

school to house 250 pupils. It was to be built just east of Steinmann Mennonite Church on 16-1/2 acres of land on the Wagler and Roth farms. The new school would replace Plattsville, New Hamburg, Tavistock and New Dundee Continuation Schools. Originally it was to have been named Wilmot District High School, but the education

department asked that the names of the participating counties be used.

W-O opened in September of 1955 with a four-room addition to the original plans added to accommodate the extra students from Tavistock. The high school's official opening was held on Monday, January 30, 1956. Mr. Ian W. McNaughton was the first principal.